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ABSTRACT

Current changes in the American nuclear family, the impact of changes in family structure on children, and a rationale for day care services are delineated in this literature review. The family modifications examined are (1) divorce, (2) remarriage, (3) single parenting, (4) father absence, (5) teenage parenting, and (6) extended families. Particular attention is given, respectively, to children's problems in the transition from an intact to a remarried family, and to the impact of father absence on children's social, intellectual, and emotional behavior. The history of day care provision in the United States is outlined, and different types of provision are described. It is concluded from the review of literature that the traditional American family has changed due to a rising divorce rate, lowered birth rate, increased numbers of women in the work force, altered male and female roles, mobility in society, and other changes in economic and value orientations. Because of changing family structures, child rearing patterns have also altered. Since traditional sources of support for families with children are not readily available, new or additional support systems for families must be found. Traditional family support systems may also need to be reviewed. (Author/RH)

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Effects of Changed Family Structures on Children: A Review of the Literature

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Effects of Changed Family Structures on Children:

A Review of the Literature

What constitutes the American family? Historically, the traditional family has consisted of a mother, a father and their child or children. The family's responsibilities are to protect, socialize, and meet the emotional and physical needs of its members, especially the children. Traditionally, the father has been cast as the breadwinner: the one who meets the physical needs of the family.

Today, family structures are changing and with them the responsibilities and roles of the individual family members. Both males and females are taking parenting more seriously and examining their options more carefully. Families today take many forms. According to the 1970 census, only 44% of all U. S. families fit the description of the traditional family (Rapoport, Rapoport, & Strelitz, 1977). The majority of families (56%) are composed differently. Single parent families resulting from divorce, death, adoption, or illegitimate births are increasing. Greenberg (1980) predicts that "almost half of all present day infants are destined to live at least a portion of their lives in a single parent household" (p. 42).

This paper reviews the effects of changes in the nuclear family and the impact on children. The family modifications examined are: divorce, remarriage, single parenting, father absence, teenage

parenting, and extended families. The paper concludes with the need for supplementary child care as families are restructured.

The American family is seen by many as disintegrating, terminating, even dying. Others believe the changes are indicative of the diversity present in society: that unity and cohesiveness are found in many family forms. As families change so must their child-rearing practices. Dokecki (1979), Keniston (1977), and Powell (1980) call for changing family support systems to augment the changing family's needs. In a society where self-sufficiency is valued, where parents are seen as the sole support of their children, where autonomy and independence are expected, the move from the nuclear family to other family systems raises serious questions for child-rearing practices. Who cares for the children? Who provides support for parents? Is the single parent, whether male or female, able to sustain economic, personal and social vitality for themselves and their children?

Impact of Divorce on Children

A dramatic increase in the number of divorces in the United States during the last 15 years, 2.4 per 1,000 population in 1964 to 5.0 per 1,000 population in 1976 (United States Bureau of the Census, 1976), has had a direct impact on the lives of school age children. This origin of change in the traditional family structure often affects the in-school performance and behavior of students. Data from one study indicate approximately

20% of children in elementary schools may be from divorced parents; at the kindergarten and first grade level this percentage may be as high as 40 or 50% (Wilkinson & Beck, 1977). As a result of these phenomena, many researchers are studying the adjustment problems of children of divorced parents.

Some of the areas in which this research is concentrating are: the impact of divorce on children of different ages at the time of divorce (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976), a comparison of children's reactions to a loss of a parent through divorce versus a loss of a parent through death (Bernard, 1978), and the children's emotional-behavorial problems and overall degree of psychological adjustment as they face the divorce of their parents (Kalter & Rembar, 1981).

Kelly and Wallerstein (1980) found that a majority of young children believed the separation and divorce of their parents was stressful. The children were concerned and confused about two main questions: Who will take care of me? Will my relationship with my father and mother last?

Both death of a parent and divorce of parents cause stress for a child according to Bernard (1978), and Felner, Stolberg, and Cowen (1975); however, there are major differences in how the children react in the two situations. Death is usually quick and certain; divorce is a slower, more ambiguous process. Death has specific ceremony; divorce does not. Death is irreversible, divorce is not. Felner et. al. indicate that emotional reaction for the two groups of children differ. Reactions for children who

experience death of a parent are usually depression and anxiety while children of divorced parents usually exhibit disruptive and aggressive behavior.

Kalter and Rembar (1981) conducted a study at the University of Michigan between September, 1976 and November, 1977 of 161 cases involving children from divorced families. They concluded that problems of these children fell into three general categories: psychological, which included anxiety, sadness, moodiness, phobia and depression; academic, which led to poor grades and/or not working up to potential; and social, which included aggressive behavior toward parents and peers. These conclusions closely parallel the observations by Kelly and Wallerstein (1976).

Kalter and Rembar also found pronounced relationship between age of the child during the divorce process and the degree of emotional disturbance observed at later psychiatric evaluations. They did find the timing of parental separation/divorce was associated with different vulnerabilities. For example, school refusal or truancy occurred when children were six years old or older at the time of separation. Aggression with parents, siblings and peers occurred when the child was between the ages of three and five.

The impact divorce has on children often follows a consistent pattern: First, there is a period of disorganization; the standard of living often changes; and one parent usually leaves the home (Skeen & McKenry, 1980). These changes cause children to

experience ambivalent feelings as they attempt to comprehend the events. At first they deny what has happened; they will not face the reality that one parent is gone. This is often followed by a period of anger, which causes them to strike out at those involved in the situation. When the anger lessens, they try to bargain or make a deal to get the missing parent back in the home. When this fails children realize that they cannot change the situation and they may become depressed. Children eventually accept the reality of the divorce and reach a certain level of acceptance of the new family form (Hozman & Froiland, 1977).

Kelly and Wallerstein (1980) found that some of the academic problems that were observed by teachers included: high levels of anxiety which resulted in the children not being able to concentrate on school work, daydreaming, constantly roaming around the room and interrupting classroom activity, sadness and depression, which also affected academic achievement negatively.

Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (Note 1) studied school-related problems faced by children of divorce: They compared children of families having intense continuing marital conflict, and families experiencing a divorce. They collected data at two month, one year, and two year intervals. The findings include the following: The pattern of behavior of children changed over a two year period. Boys seemed to be affected by conflict in family conditions more than girls. Children from divorced families were more aggressive,

distractible, and demanding during the first year than those from high conflict families. After the second year the types of behaviors of the two groups were reversed. Both the divorced and the high conflict groups had more acting out behavior than the low stress group. There was no difference between the groups intellectually at the second month and the first year intervals, but at the second year interval children in the divorced families scored significantly lower on performance I.Q. and marginally lower on the full scale I.Q. than children in low stress families.

These findings led Hetherington et. al. to conclude:

> The parent variables which correlate with the intellectual performance of children in nuclear families are more stable over time than those in single parent families. They resemble those of single parent children at two months after divorce. However with increasing age for boys in nuclear families paternal availability and paternal warmth become even more highly correlated with I.Q. scores. . . .Low maternal control and inconsistency and family disorganization seemed to be particularly important long term predictors of impulsivity in children's single performance. (p. 17)

As a result of these findings, suggestions for classroom teachers' actions to help children of divorced families are made.

These include the following: (1) Teachers should provide a structured environment, because, when the child's home environment is unstable, the structure of the classroom may provide security the child needs. (2) Teachers should become especially knowledgeable about what is happening in the child's life and make allowances for the child's behavior. (3) Teachers should adjust the curriculum to include materials and units on single-parent families, father-headed, mother-headed, remarried, and extended families. (4) After-school and adult education programs can be provided for families that need these services (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1980). (5) Teachers can work with the administration and guidance personnel to set up divorce counseling groups for children. In such groups, children can discuss their feelings about divorce with other children facing the same problem. This provides a realistic picture of divorce and develops coping skills following divorce (Wilkinson & Beck, 1977).

Because divorce statistics continue to increase and larger percentages of children will become children of divorce, early childhood educators need to be more knowledgeable on how these children are affected, what longitudinal research studies show, and be prepared to use the data to develop ways to help alleviate the burdens found by these children.

Remarriage and the Child

While current developmental literature contains many descriptions of the effects of divorce on the child and family

relationships during the initial post-divorce period, there is very little discussion of the effects of eventual remarriage on the child. A family composed of a divorced single parent with children is probably in a transitional stage which may last only two or three years. In earlier days, societal norms were based on the intact family; but today, over a third of the nation is living in some form of post-divorce family. Remarriage has become a commonplace social phenomenon. Current surveys indicate four out of five divorced people remarry (Glick & Norton, 1976). Most children of divorced parents are in some form of family involving a substitute parent. The number of such children ranges from estimates of 10 to 15 million (Visher & Visher, 1978). Regardless of the statistics, however, interruption of an intact family by divorce and remarriage is still viewed as less than ideal in American society.

The term "step," which is used for non-kin parents or children, usually carries negative connotations; however, it is the most frequently used term. Fables of the cruel stepmother and neglected stepchildren are well known. Smith's (1953) comprehensive account of the stepchild in literary, historical, legal, and psychiatric records attempted to correct the wholly negative perspective of step-relationships while retaining the term. Conversely, Bernard (1956) avoided the use of "step," calling it a smear word and consistently used "acquired" for remarriage relationships in her study. Mead (1970) considered

the use of negative kin terms vulgar when applied to people in a remarried relationship. Research related to the influence of such terms as "step," "ex," or "quasi-kin," remains to be done. Many social theorists maintain that negative kinship terms are inappropriate and damage fragile non-kin family relationships.

Several terms, other than "step," are currently found in descriptions of a family following remarriage: blended, reconstituted, merged, recoupled. While there are no set definitions for these terms, they do indicate specific family groupings. The remarried family is usually composed of one natural parent, the children, and a new spouse. Another form consists of both spouses bringing their natural children to the family. Whatever the term being used for the remarried family--whether blended, reconstituted, or merged--the emphasis is on emerging relationships of a new family from the prior ones.

The family has long been the focus of attention by theorists and researchers as the central social institution in society. It is well recognized that the family is the primary mediator, instructor, and socializer of the child (Benson, 1971; Keniston, 1977). In the literature, the usual family development framework consists of the childless couple, then an extended period of time centered around the presence of children from preschool to school age to adolescence to adulthood (Dokecki, Note 2). These transitional stages have formed the primary basis for research on the family in developmental psychology and sociology. Current inquiry includes

consideration of a wealth of intervening variables relevant to family interactions, such as the influence of television, women's rights, pollution, housing, economics, and public policy. This is a rapid move from earlier consideration of the family as a static unit. Family interaction research, however, is still focused on the intact, "natural" family, with very little attention given to other forms. In studies on the effects of divorce, the time frame is usually several months to two years (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978).

The family formed through remarriage also requires attention because of the changes and adjustments family members go through. While there are numerous resources in a counseling or testimonial mode for remarried families, research is still wed to family crises, not transformations. Perhaps the lack of research in family reformation is due to the persistent view of family as a static unit; however, no reorganization is a smooth or automatic process. Achievement of successful acquired family relationships has been considered difficult, if not impossible (Bernard, 1956). A primary reason for stressful adjustment is that unresolved issues from past relationships will be carried into the new family (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980). Following the dissolution of a nuclear family through divorce or death of a spouse, there is a process, sometimes extended over several years, of reformation. Each family member goes through a period of disorganization with attempts to retain former roles leading to reoganization into a new pattern of relationship

(Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978). In Piagetian terms family reformation is a process of disequilibrium of both thought and emotion resulting in a new level of equilibrium.

Thus far, the effects of remarriage on the family are largely unexplored. These effects are now beginning to surface as research questions. A basic impetus to study reconstituted families may be increasing recognition of lifespan development of individuals. The lifespan perspective is a shift in emphasis to processes of development rather than stages or plateaus of development and highlights the continual change of individuals throughout life (Lerner & Spanier, 1978). Added to this focus is current interest in the transactional perspective of person and environment, each acting on the other to bring change and growth. The child, again in Piagetian terms is an active, curious, initiating transactor, doing commerce with the world. The more appropriate formula for studying the child is viewed not as a unit of behavior in a vacuum, but constantly evolving and immersed in reciprocal interactions with family members (p. 9).

Confusing boundaries: from intact to remarried family. As the mediator for children and the larger society, the family is the usual major support system for its members. Conflicts in values and loyalties are negotiated within the family. Children find their most important role models in siblings, parents, and grandparents. Membership in a family brings a strong sense of relatedness, yet also provides a degree of autonomy for individuals. There is an overriding continuity of experience and history in an intact family,

what McMillan (Note 3) calls "shared connection."

Dissolution of the family and subsequent reconstitution breaks the shared connections of time and place and relationship. A family going through the reorganization process begins to modify and adjust its roles. The support system is strained and family role models appear inconsistent. During the post divorce period, parent-child relations may become unstable due to less communication and increased oppositional behaviors. Remarriage which often follows a period of inconsistent discipline can result in an abrupt adjustment in parent-child relations. There may be a shift back to a firmer pattern of discipline, but not with the intrusion of a new stepparent (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978).

Family members frequently resist merging by recalling former shared connections and making comparisons of the acquired parent to the absent parent. For all practical purposes, the new parent's job is rearing someone else's children, a fact which makes establishing family relations difficult. In a remarried family, relationships begin mid-stream, often with attempts to mimic patterns of relationships which went on before. The pressure of time and desire to succeed in developing shared connections may cause over-zealous parenting and delay true intimacy in the merged family.

The noncustodial parent is also stressed by the dilemma of providing support needed by the children and keeping distance from

the new family. Because of the children, relations with the ex-spouse continue, usually involving conflict over child oriented questions. During the post divorce period, shared time between the ex-spouse and child may have actually increased, only to be curtailed again following remarriage. On the positive side, children can often be mediators of confusing relationships between natural and acquired parents (Bohannan, 1970). Unexpected congenial relations with ex-kin may be possible with the children as the connecting link.

Dissolution and reformation of the family affect sibling relationships also. When children from two families merge through remarriage, shifts in sibling order may result in role confusion. The oldest child may gain a new step-sibling relationship and shift to the role of middle child, with loss of some privileges and responsibilities to the new oldest child. In other reconstituted families, the new sibling order can mean that the five year old baby of the family is replaced in that role by a two year old. Just what effects such changes have on children are largely unknown; however, there are two theories from the field of sociology which are useful in understanding the family remarriage process: Social role transition and the development of role boundaries.

New boundaries: remarriage and the child. Within family system theory, remarriage is viewed as one of many transitions in the developmental framework. As such, there are basic factors of

the divorce/remarriage process which parallel other family transitions, i.e., moving, birth of a new child, boarding a grandparent, or loss of a job. The common element in all these shifts is entering or leaving a social role. Each transition involves some degree of disassociation from former roles and expansion to embrace new roles. Bernard (1956) views the social transition as permanently incorporating a new person into an existing group which means that "a delicately balanced web of relationships must be rewoven. A new equilibrium must be achieved including the new element" (p. 214). The vital difference in divorce/remarriage, as compared to other social transitions, is the significance of the person disassociating from the family. The separation of a parent/spouse from the family means a subsequent loss of intimacy, support, and influence, followed by a difficult period of developing new associations. Leaving friends and secondary relatives brings about changes in norms and behavior. This situation usually has precedence in family history. But leaving a parent/spouse is a much more intense transition, one not based on previous experience. Unfortunately, in our society, traditional custody laws may aggravate the separation of one parent and the children, denying basic rights of continuous interaction.

In normal social transitions, the child is able to look to other family members for role models (Burr, 1973). For example, in the death of a close relative, appropriate ways of expressing grief are modeled by family members for the child. This occasion

may be repeated several times in the family's development, giving the child a fairly clear norm of behavior to follow. During the process of disbanding the intact family and reconstituting through remarriage, there is usually an absence of role models. This makes the transition more difficult. Also, this experience is one of joint transition, with each family member going through personal adjustment (Hess & Waring, 1978). While the parent is absorbed in establishing a new marital relationship, the child is trying to adjust to a substitute parent. This self-absorption of each family member during the reorganization process may "preclude providing the affective support the other requires, or it may generate resentment at the imposition of additional demands during a period of stress and so encourage mutual withdrawal" (p. 253). The feeling of lack of support only exacerbates the child's difficulty in clarifying roles.

As the intrafamily system changes with the addition of an acquired parent and/or children, so does the clarity of roles for both new and existing members (Cottrell, 1942). What was once acceptable behavior may now be inappropriate. What used to be a valued tradition may be replaced by a new experience. Exposure to different habits and mannerisms results in role conflict, all a part of blending unfamiliar lifestyles (Burr, 1973). In a study of parental roles in remarried families, Duberman (1970) found that acquired parents also face role confusion. They have

little trouble displaying affection and respect for the children, but have difficulty with the basics of parenting: disciplining, instructing, and socializing the children. Formerly successful parents may encounter discouragement or friction in parenting acquired children. Merging parent-child relationships are problematic due to the lack of role clarification and interaction patterns.

Early research in step-relationships emphasized the effects on the child in psychoanalytic terms. The child of a remarried couple was thought to be unstable, dependent, nervous, even neurotic (Wallenstein, 1937). Populations for these early studies came from child welfare agencies or clinics and numerous factors of family life were excluded from consideration. A causal link between child neurosis and parental remarriage was claimed. By the early 1950s, sociologists, including Bernard (1956) were warning against relying exclusively on clinical and judicial records for information about families of remarriage (p. 311). A shift was made in research populations; however, it resulted in narrowly defined socioeconomic groups. Frequently studies concluded that characteristics of remarried families were identical to characteristics of the lower social class where divorce was chronic (Goode, 1951). The children of such families were destined to either repeat the trend or avoid entering a marital relationship.

A more transactional research framework for remarriage effects is needed today, one which stresses the commonalities and relationships between the child and family. Because of these interdependencies, the child's roles, personality, and development cannot be isolated from events in the family system. For example, discussion of a child's developmental task delay during family reconstitution must also include information about parental power shifts, decrease in self worth, and emotional distance, which are occurring at the same time. The family system, which at an earlier time made smooth exchanges with its members and wider society, now leaves the child more directly dependent on the environment and other people.

Research is unable to determine causal links between remarriage and changes in the child's personality, academic performance, or attitude, from what might have surfaced if the family were still intact. Children's development following remarriage is neither totally positive nor negative. It is far more complex and transactional than simple cause and effect. Children and parents are co-agents in development. In the process of reforming a family, events take place, roles change and people develop. A transactional framework of remarriage takes these multi-facets into consideration, without attributing cause to any one.

Society has traditionally invested the primary responsibility for child development in the kinship system. According to

Mead (1970), "we have constructed a family system which depends upon fidelity, lifelong monogamy, and the survival of both parents. But we have never made adequate social provision for the security and identity of the children if that marriage is broken" (p. 117). The problems remain: lack of meaningful extended kinship terms, narrow perspective of effects of remarriage, and role confusion in reconstituted families. As remarriage increases in our society, family stability for children may not be a matter of kinship so much as strong affectional ties and clear role expectations, equally possible for the non-kin family.

Single Parents

Single parenting has occurred throughout America's history, though it has not been acknowledged as a normal family form. Society has usually considered the mother the best parent for children when the family is divided. Whatever the reason for the father's absence (extended illness, military duties, imprisonment, death, divorce, or separation), the mother managed the home and had custody of the children. In cases of permanent family division, society has assumed that if the children are not awarded to the mother, she is an unfit person. On the whole, the public still holds these views; however, changes are taking place. It is now acknowledged that desertion, separation, divorce, imprisonment, vocational demands, or death happen to both sexes; hence, the single parent may be male or female.

Single parenting occurs today primarily through court awarded custody of children. The issue of parental rights in custody has changed dramatically. Levin (1976) reported that under English law fathers were considered sole custodians of their children. Many believe that the Industrial Revolution caused the law to change making the mother the custodial parent (Noble & Noble, 1975). The father no longer worked on the farm or in the home. The mother stayed home and took care of the children; therefore, she was already the custodial parent. In the opinion of the law, there was no substitute for mother love. The rights of the father were denied even when the mother was proven to be abusive of the children or did not want custody.

In the early 1970s the trend began to shift again. Legislation was passed in several states which guaranteed equal consideration of the mother and father in custody hearings: Sex would no longer be the only determinate in granting custody. In 1963, a judge in the District of Columbia granted custody to a father on the basis that custody should go to "the individual (or parent) who fulfills most adequately the mothering functioning, i.e., the nurturing (physical, emotional, and psychological) which a child needs to become a well-adjusted individual in our society" (Levin, 1976, p. 45). The number of fathers being granted full custody is increasing. Atkin and Rubin (1976) estimated that "custody of 10 to 15 percent of children under eighteen is awarded by the

court to the father at the time of the divorce proceedings" (p. 152). The percentage today is probably much higher.

Mothers may voluntarily give up custody of the children to their ex-husbands, not because they are unfit, but for a variety of reasons. The children of separating couples may be given a voice in selecting the parent to have custody. In other cases, the children may be divided, half going with the mother, the other half with the father. This arrangement does not deprive either parent of children but attempts to balance the separated family. Shared custody, with children spending parts of the year with each parent, is sometimes awarded.

Shared custody has two forms, divided or joint. When divided custody is granted, the children spend equal but separate time with each parent (Lewis, 1978). The parents may live in different states. Atkin and Rubin (1976) describe divided custody as being disruptive to the children's lives and to the relationship with either parent.

Like divided custody, joint custody is rare and judges are reluctant to grant it. Both forms evoke images of dividing the child or children into parts. Yet joint custody may be the most humanitarian way to deal with the custody issue. In such situations, the parents generally live in the same town and share decision making responsibilities. No provision is made for court-ordered child support (Lewis, 1978). The children may

live with either parent or spend a period of time with each parent. Greif (1979) concluded from her study of fathers with joint custody and those with visitation rights that "the trauma of divorce can be minimized by the child's continuous, open, and easy access to both parents" (p. 318). Fathers with joint custody were also found to be more involved in all aspects of their children's lives. They did not believe that their situations were disruptive for the children. Living space for the children was provided in each home and suitcases were not necessary. Separation was easier because both parents and the children knew that they would have time together again soon. The school was often used as the drop-off point for the children when the parents' relationship was less than amicable. Greif found that most of the couples involved in the study believed that joint custody worked and that the arrangement was in the best interests of the children.

Split custody occurs when there are two or more children. Usually school age sons are awarded to the father. The mother usually receives custody of infants and daughters. Children may also be divided according to which parent can best meet the medical or educational needs of the individual children.

Types of single parent families. The decline in the number of two-parent families is largely a result of the soaring divorce rate. According to Calhoun (1979) one in three marriages ends in divorce: Current estimates are that between 20% and 30% of children growing

up in the 1980s will have divorced parents. Another 5% to 10% will be living with one parent because of separation or death. A smaller percentage will be born to unmarried women.

There is increasing recognition of marriages that may be intact but the children have a single parent. The factors leading to one parent's absence are: illness, imprisonment, military duties, or work requirements. Some jobs demand shift work, erratic hours, or extended trips, such as, sales, medicine, trucking, or politics. Vocations like these cause marital partners to be away from home and family at strategic times. These parents may not see their children until the weekend, when a buddy-type relationship of low responsibility takes place. The absentee parent may seem to be a boarder in the house or peripheral figure who does not have much impact on the children.

Problems of single parent families. Lack of financial support is often an immediate problem in single parent families. The father usually is working when separation occurs. If the mother has not been working, she probably will begin a job, causing both mother and children stress as their time together is limited. Schoyer (1980) says that the mother will undergo a variety of changes visible to her children. She may work longer hours. She may become inconsistent in her discipline patterns. The children may not understand why mother is punitive at one moment and permissive the next. The mother may be more relaxed as a result of her husband's

departure, but feel depressed and overburdened by her increased responsibilities.

Single fathers, too, have financial restraints. Katz (1979) stated that 194 out of 409 fathers reported need of financial help to maintain their households: Services which were provided by the wife must now be purchased. Another source of financial strain occurs if the parent changes work shifts or shortens working hours to spend more time with the children. While the parent is working, the children must have supervision and care, provided through day care centers, nurseries, or family members; however, the cost may be prohibitive. If children become ill, the parent may have to miss work, endangering employment.

Meeting the emotional needs of the children is a difficult problem for single parents. Separation from a parent causes children to experience a variety of losses. As the family unit divides, the children lose their psychological support system. Without both parents, the children may feel angry and betrayed. When a parent is absent, the children lose a role model and the identification process is disrupted. Some children experience an unrealistic sense of guilt, believing they are responsible for the division. They may fear the remaining parent will leave them. Unfortunately, some children are pulled between the two parents and used as pawns. Calhoun et al. (1979) point out that parental relationship problems cause stress on the children and may warrant

temporary outside support in order to prevent permanent difficulties.

Discipline of children may shift between permissiveness and harshness. Boundaries and punishments which were negotiated between two parents now are the prerogative of one. Fritsch and Burkhead (1981) found two different behavior patterns in the children of single parent families, depending on which parent was gone from the home. Absence of the father is correlated with "acting out" behavior, including hostile attitudes or actions, use of drugs or alcohol, running away, school truancy, and delinquency. "Acting in" behavior (daydreaming, social withdrawal, fear of school, regression, and crying) is correlated with absence of the mother. Single parents discover that former methods of discipline are no longer effective as the children's pattern of behavior evolves.

Children's peer relationships may be affected by absent parents. Schoyer (1980) reported that children of divorced parents were unable to play creatively. Because they were unable to play, the children felt depressed and angry. These emotions, in turn, further interfered with their capacity to play; hence, the children became possessive, noisy, and restless. They were apt to kick, hit, and occasionally bite their peers.

Effects of single parenting on children. The results of single parenting will depend on the age of the children at the time of separation, the reason for the separation, and the relationships established in the new family form. While the

problems faced by single parents may be numerous, there are some positive aspects of the single parent family. Greenberg (1980) states that the single parent family has two primary features; "the exposure of parents and children to the duality of sex roles and the opening of communication between parent and child" (p. 39).

The single parent may share family problems with the children. Greenberg (1980) believes the open communication between a single parent and children is the result of the children replacing the missing spouse as a confidant. For both, this sharing may be a coping technique of their new family structure. The topic of sexuality is also discussed more openly. It is no longer mother-daughter or father-son conversation about the facts of life. The single parent may be open about his/her own sex or social life. As Greenberg implies, the single parent family may be an important factor in reducing sex stereotyping in today's society.

The school problems of children in one parent families are well known and are usually attributed to inadequacies in the home. Brown (1980) reported the results of a study which compared children from one-parent and two-parent families in the areas of school achievement, tardiness, absenteeism, truancy, discipline problems, suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts. The majority of high achievers came from two-parent families. In all other areas there was a higher percentage of children from single

parent families; children from single parent families were the only ones expelled. Although the final results and implications of the study have not been compiled, Brown identified the following areas of need:

> Schools need to review and update student records and to identify children from one-parent homes in order that guidance counselors and teachers can become sensitive and responsive to the needs of these children. Schools must revise their calendars to make certain that working single parents have regular access to school personnel and activities after working hours. School systems, through their adult education programs, must assume a major leadership role in providing effective programs in the field of parenting (p. 540).

Traditionally, the parent-teacher conference has been a mother-teacher conference, gifts are made for Mother's Day, not Father's Day, and mothers are asked to assist with field trips and in the classrooms. Teachers need to examine their expectations and attitudes as they are required to deal with changing family structures. In addition to school assistance, community organizations, such as Parents without Partners, offer support to single parents. Many single parents have expressed an interest in Big

Brother or Big Sister and Foster Grandparent programs for additional support. Skeen and McKenry (1980) reported methods teachers could utilize in helping single parents cope with problems. Their concluding suggestion, while, not specifically school related, is appropriate for single parent families: "Encourage parents to take time to establish a meaningful personal life both as a parent and as an important person apart from the child. This can be their best gift to their children" (pp. 9-10).

Single Father Families

Females as single parents have been socially accepted for many years, yet males who choose the same role are often viewed with skepticism and are discriminated against. As a result of decades of stereotyping, their masculinity may even be questioned. Males are slowly overcoming judgmental attitudes related to being single fathers. In 1970, 16% of single parent households in the United States were headed by males (Rapoport, Rapoport & Strelitz, 1977). Between 1962 and 1973, there was a 71% increase in the number of single father families in the U. S. (Lewis, 1978). In 1976, there were estimated to be 1.5 million single fathers with 3.5 million children (Lewis, 1976). Such a fast growing group, and its impact on society and the children involved, deserves more research and attention than is currently in process. In child development research the father has usually been ignored. The classic study of Sears (1957) is based on interviews with

mothers; moreover, the first study to examine possible father-infant interaction was based on interviews with mothers (Levin, 1976). Today, in order to understand the single father, it is necessary to examine how and why the role of father has changed. Who is the single father and how did he obtain such status? What problems does he face? How are the children affected?

Historically, the mother-child relationship has been considered biologically determined. Bowlby (1969) refers to the "innate mother instinct." It was believed that a child could survive without a father, but would perish without a mother. If a woman did not enjoy being a mother and caring for her children, she was considered abnormal. Conversely, a father who did enjoy caring for his children was considered abnormal, less than a man. In her book, The Single Parent Experience, Klein (1973) defines maternal instinct as a "deep instinct for wanting children, desire to love them, cherish, nuture, support, protect them in deeply emotional--not just physical ways" (p. 45).

Greenberg and Morris (1974) suggested that fathers were also capable of being deeply involved with their children. Fathers were shown to develop a bond with their newborn if early contact and involvement with the infant took place. As early physical contact increased, the positive feelings the father had for the infant and for himself also seemed to increase.

It is apparent that fathers are capable of performing functions

that were once considered "mothering" and the term "parenting" is perhaps a more acceptable term. The ability to respond to, or to care for, a child is not an instinct, but an acquired or learned skill. An infant's response to a parent is not based on the sex of the parent. An infant who is entirely breast-fed will respond to the sound of the mother's voice and the sucking reflex begins. Yet, a baby can be fed or consoled by either parent. Rapoport etal. (1977) reports from a Ferris study of single-parent families that:

> It would be rash perhaps to interpret this as conclusive evidence of the relative unimportance of the mother-child relationship, particularly in a social context in which fathers, whether lone parents or not, are increasingly taking on aspects of a role which was formerly confined to the mother. While the role itself may well be crucial to the child's welfare and development, it is perhaps also true that the mother is not necessarily the only person who can adequately fulfill it (p. 100).

Today many men are choosing to be fathers and not husbands. Lewis (1978) defines the single father as "the parent of children under 18 years old who live in his household all of the time or for long periods of time, and for whom he had primary responsibility (p. 643). Men become single fathers as a result of death, desertion,

adoption, or divorce. A widower or a man who has been deserted has little time to prepare himself or his children for their new relationship. Their sense of loss is often accompanied by humiliation or anger. On the other hand, a divorced father with custody or an adoptive father may have months to prepare for single fatherhood.

The adoptive single father makes a deliberate commitment to taking care of a child. The first single father adoption occurred in 1965 in Oregon (Lewis, 1978). Typically, he is in his thirties, has an established career, and lives in an urban area. The adopted child is generally a school age male and a "difficult" or "hard to place" child. The motives of single men who wish to adopt are thoroughly examined by adoption agencies in a process that could take years. They are put through a series of interviews, home visits, and psychological exams. These potential fathers must be determined and patient as many agencies will tell them that the appropriate child is not available. One reason for the delay is that single men who wish to adopt are generally considered sexually deviant (Levin, 1976). Klein (1973) interviewed one adoptive father who stated, "I practically had to get affidavits from girls saying I'd slept with them and I was really OK in bed" (p. 48).

Schlesinger's (1978) study of American motherless families revealed that single fathers face many problems. There is lack

of role clarity as homemaker and lack of knowledge of normal child development. Coping with the problems and needs of single fatherhood requires creativity. McFadden (1974) describes his experiences in his book, Bachelor Fatherhood. His story offers advice for single fathers on managing a career and a home, caring for children, and beginning or continuing a social life. McFadden rearranged his career to work at home. He remodeled his home to make it more manageable. On special occasions, such as New Year's, he hired several babysitters and arranged for the neighborhood children to stay in his home. His neighbors, in turn, babysat for him when needed. Creativity, such as that demonstrated by McFadden, is often discouraged by society. Schlesinger suggested that "co-operative babysitting arrangements, co-operative shopping, and other community-based joint projects would help these fathers" (p. 12). School and community programs which give young men the opportunity to learn more home management and child development not only help alleviate stereotyping but also foster feelings of confidence and competence in future fathers. They will be better prepared to assume the roles available to them as the American family changes.

Impact of Father Absence

The impact of the fatherless family situation on the intellectual, social and emotional development of children has

been researched extensively; however, some effects of father absence may affect other developmental variables. The following are some aspects of father absence affecting children or family members:

-The father's absence may be combined with self-pity or grief when the father has died.

-The children may not only have to deal with father absence but a husbandless mother.

-The economic condition of the family is reduced greatly with father absence. This may produce new stress factors for the entire family.

-The mother may feel certain hostilities toward life because of the father's absence.

-The role traditionally fulfilled by the father now must be taken over by the mother while she continues to carry out her own role (Lefrancois, 1980).

-The children come under the influences of outside forces, including relatives or social welfare agencies who serve as a support system for the mother.

Finally, the children may be cast into new roles, especially the eldest. That child may have to assume some of the father's

role and responsibilities (Newman & Newman, 1978). The following questions are addressed in this review of the effects of father absence:

-Are there lasting measurable effects on children due to the absence of the father?

-What is the impact of various lengths of time of father absence?

-How do the children's ages during father absence relate to effects on the children?

-What is the significance of the sex of the children related to the father's absence?

Impact on social behavior. One of the most frequent generalizations about children in fatherless homes is that they are prone to juvenile delinquency. Studies of the consequences for boys are numerous; however, much depends on the way the mother handles the situation after the father is gone (Benson, 1968). Other studies report differences in results because of race (Shaw & McKay, 1932), socio economic status (SES) (Willie, 1967), rural versus urban community (Ferdinand, 1964), and age (Monahan, 1960). After analyzing the findings in the above areas, Herzog and Sudia (1973) conclude that the father's absence from the home may be involved but appears to be far less critical in predicting delinquency than such factors as the SES level of the family or the mother's ability

to adequately supervise the child. They also point out that fatherless families are far more likely to live in poverty than are father-present families. In their efforts to discover whether fatherless boys were really over-represented among juvenile delinquents, Herzog and Sudia made the following observations:

1. If all variables could be adequately controlled, there would probably be a somewhat greater frequency of delinquent behavior among children in fatherless homes.

2. The difference, even though statistically significant, might well be so small as to have little practical significance.

3. The father's absence in itself is less meaningful than are the climate and tone of the home and the kind of supervision given to the child. (p. 203)

Willie (1967) reported that census tracts with high proportions of single-parent homes were more likely to have a high rate of delinquency but that the children in the broken homes were not necessarily the ones who were delinquent. Robins (1966) found that male behavior problems, but not academic problems, increased with an increasing proportion of fatherless children in his school. Willie also reported a strong relation between fatherless

males and delinquency among whites and between income level and delinquency among black males.

Impact on intellectual behavior. Studies of school achievement often show that the children from fatherless homes do worse in school than the children from homes where a father is present. Carlsmith (1964) published a study attempting to discover the relationship between father absence and scholastic aptitude.

Pederson (1978) tested the impact of father absence on the intellectual development of five to six month old lower class black infants. Male infants from the father-absent families were lower on the Bayley Mental Development Index than males from intact families. In addition, it has been found that males may score lower than average on tests of intellectual performance and may perform below grade level. Father-absent boys have shown a reversal of the usual math-verbal ratio, doing better in verbal skills than in math. Since this pattern is more typical of females than of males, the reversal has been interpreted to mean that their masculine identification has been impaired by growing up in a fatherless home (Herzog & Sudia, 1973; Carlsmith, 1964).

Maccoby (1962) found that males whose fathers were absent when they were ages one to five, performed better on verbal than on analytical tests, whereas most boys excelled on analytical testing. Milton (1957) also found that boys who were separated from their fathers scored poorly on problem-solving tests. Usually

boys do better than girls on these tests. If boys test lower in mathematics, growing up in a home without a father could be counted as a loss; but if it makes him just as good in mathematics and better in his verbal abilities, it may not be considered such a loss (Herzog & Sudia, 1973).

Mackler (1969) tested children in a Harlem school and concluded:

> Having a father in the home, does not insure success nor does his absence insure failure. What is common to most successful children is an adult, usually mother, whose interest in the child and his education....is keenly sensed by the child. Mother may be working, but she is there asking about school daily, or at least once a week (p. 459).

Impact on emotional development. In studies of children whose fathers were absent because of military service, the absence increased their idealization of their fathers (Baker, Fagan, Fischer & Janda, Note 4). Two observations were made upon the return of the father to the home. First, children whose fathers were absent during their first year of life showed more aggression and were less friendly than their siblings or children who did not have absent fathers. Second, to children born during their absence, the fathers tended to be less warm and more critical (Newman & Newman, 1978).

Baker et al. (Note 4) point out that if the child already had a relationship established with his father before the absence occurred, the return home of the father is far more likely to be associated with favorable changes, including better school grades and behavior.

Hetherington and Duer (1972) explored the relationship between father absence and behavior in teenage girls. In their study, the effect of father absence manifested during the adolescent period was an inability to functionally interact with members of the male sex. They go on to state that it appeared the father's absence during the first five years were the crucial ones in determining the effects of the absence. Hetherington and Duer also pointed out that the loss of the father before the age of five usually had a more pronounced effect than if the father was lost later in the child's life.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) report that the early effects of father absence in the home produced in two and three year old children a regression in toileting habits, bewilderment, and clinging behavior in the presence of strangers. In some of the children, development was still retarded a year later. Three and four year olds exhibited loss of confidence and self-esteem and blamed themselves for the absence of the father. The five and six year old children were less affected developmentally, but girls continued to expect the father to return home.

Biller's (1970) research shows that young boys in father absent homes demonstrated a feminine patterning of behavior; however, there is not evidence that boys growing up in homes without fathers are more likely to become homosexuals than are boys growing up in father-present homes. By the time they reach adolescence, they behave in very masculine, though sometimes antisocial, ways.

Hetherington and Duer (1972) did find a difference in the heterosexual behavior of adolescent girls. The girls were withdrawn, passive, and subdued around boys, or they were overly aggressive in almost a promiscuous way. The researchers found that girls who were inhibited, rigid, and restrained around males were from homes where the mother was widowed. Girls who sought attention from boys, showed early heterosexual behavior, and nonverbally communicated openness and responsiveness were generally from homes where the parents were divorced. The earlier the separation occurred, the more pronounced the effects.

Biller (1971) found boys' behavior in father-absent homes included a lack of masculinity or exaggerated attempts to prove masculinity, inadequate peer adjustment, dependency, lack of social responsibility, and general immaturity. Boys who were separated from their father after the age of six were more dependent on their peers and tended to avoid competitive, physical contact games (Hetherington & Duer, 1972).

Summary of effects of father absence. Father absence cannot be isolated from many other variables. Some of the characteristics found might have been caused by the mother's behavior, by interviewer bias when it was known that the subject was being reared in a father-absent home, or by elements that were present in the home environment before the father was absent.

Herzog and Sudia (1973) found the impact of an absent father appears to be greater on boys than girls. The effects show up as one of "feminization" both in behavior and in cognitive skills. The age at which the separation occurred is important. The results show that the absence during the early years of life has a greater impact than later separation. The presence of an alternative male figure has a considerable effect. The alternative figure need not be an adult. An older male sibling can have an impact on sex role development. A male teacher at school or a relative can have the same impact on the fatherless child.

The generalizations about the consequences of father's absence have been reviewed and there has been no firm evidence to prove that father absence has the impact on children that is widely assumed. There are too many interacting variables making it impossible to examine father absence as a discrete, critical variable in itself.

The number of parents in the home is likely to be less crucial to the child's development than the family functioning of the

present members. Family functioning includes the mother's role and coping ability as well as the general family climate. It is determined not only by the individual characteristics and the interactions of its members but also by the circumstances and environment of the family unit.

Problems of Teenage Parenting

Teenage pregnancy is not a new phenomenon, but the number of teenage parents is. In 1965, for the 591,000 teenagers who gave birth (Osofsky, 1968), "the most obvious solution to the problem of what to do with an illegitimate child is to place it for adoption: (Semmens, 1968, p. 20). In 1976, of the one million teenagers who became pregnant, 600,000 gave birth and 97% chose to keep their babies (Population Reference Bureau, 1976). Today, teenagers are assuming the responsibilities of parenthood at an increasing rate. Economic, social, and psychological consequences of pregnancy are more likely to impact the lives of the children of teenagers than the general population because of their lack of parenting information and immaturity.

Low income. An immediate problem for the teenage parent is subsistence. A study in Boston of adolescent parents' assessment of their problems found that "the most frequently cited problem by teenage parents was that of poverty or near-poverty" (Cannon-Bonventre & Kahn, 1979, p. 1). Because of interrupted education and a lack of work experience, teenage parents either remain at

home and depend on their parents or they struggle to try to make it on their own. According to Furstenberg's (Note 5) study, dealing with the support of the family for the pregnant teenager, "adolescents who remained with their parents were more likely to advance educationally and economically as compared with their peers who left home before or immediately after their child was born" (p. 12). Regardless of where teenage parents live, the majority of services that are available include prenatal and postnatal health care and some counseling. But all of this ends shortly after the birth of the baby and usually excludes the young father. Assistance such as food, clothing, money, or job training is not readily available (Cannon-Bonventre & Kahn, 1979).

When a family's resources are limited, the first consideration given to food is cost and not nutrition. Because the diet recommended for a pregnant woman will not meet the nutritional needs of a pregnant adolescent whose own body is still developing, the teenage mother is more likely to have a low birth weight baby, a condition often linked with learning disabilities and mental retardation (Howard, 1975). The incidence of low birth weight babies is twice as great among children of adolescents as among older parents (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1976).

After birth, poverty can affect a child by interfering with developmental processes such as language. According to Minuchin and Biber (1968), language deficits, evident at a very early age in disadvantaged children, continue and increase with age.

Regardless of the area of verbal ability measured, Stern (1968) reported that children from the "culture of poverty" will score significantly lower than children from more affluent homes and that language deficits are greatest in areas associated with cognitive skills (p. 49). Therefore, the child's ability to communicate and learn is impaired.

Adolescence is the time when the family's influence on the teenager lessens as peer relationships become more important. A pregnancy at this time interferes with this process. Cannon-Bonventre and Kahn (1979) found that "whether married or single, all teenage mothers are affected by loneliness and isolation from all except their families" (p. 1). Also, based on the reports of the young mothers and other investigators, "the absence of a network of friends contributed to the probability of child abuse and neglect, depression, suicide, and marital stress" (p. 11).

Young children are affected by the social problems of teenage parents. Just as a mother's feelings of joy and pleasure are transmitted to her children, her feelings of loneliness and isolation are transferred and "the preschool age children will be as isolated as the parents" (p. 12). Sontag (1944) reported that mothers undergoing severe emotional stress during pregnancy were more likely to have hyperactive, irritable babies with digestion problems. The extent to which children may be affected by the parents' problems is reported in Hamilton (1972): "experiences of

insecurity and anxiety may affect the child's cognitive development" (p. 147). Thus, the young child may become the victim of the parents' loneliness and anxiety.

When young parents who have not established their own identities are forced into roles that they neither want nor are prepared for, internal conflicts occur. Teenage pregnancy and an early marriage often force the young father back into a dependency state at the very time adolescent males assert their independence and he "may find himself with a life long commitment which he deeply resents" (Howard, 1975, p. 57). Bedger (1980) found that if the teenage mother lives with her family and the grandmother assumes the responsibility for the child then the young mother is forced to assume the role of sibling to the child. If the reason for having the baby is that the young mother wants to love and be loved (Epstein, 1979) and during the early development period of the child "the mother acquires a negative value, as she is not identified as the loving, ever present caretaker by her child" (Bedger, 1980, p. 18) her expectations will not be met.

Children are affected by teenage parents' conflicts. Because young parents do not really know what to expect from either marriage or a child, several problems may develop. First, young parents, feeling robbed of their adolescence and unprepared for their roles, are more likely to be among the sixty percent of the teenage marriages of those under the age of 17 who divorce within the first six years (Furstenberg, 1976). Then the child must cope with the problems of

divorce. Second, the expectations which parents have for a child's development and behavior are crucial. Epstein (1980) studied teenage parents' knowledge of infant development and found that they expect "too little, too late" with respect to cognitive, social, and language development (p. 5). If parents do not provide stimulation at the time when the child is developmentally ready, delays in skill acquisition occur.

Evidence of long term effects of teenagers' lack of child development knowledge was found when Epstein extended the study. Videotapes of the mothers with their children showed "babies who were physically well cared for, but who were neither being played with nor talked to" (p. 7). The interaction of the mother and child playing together is vital in the child's cognitive development (Clarke-Stewart, 1973). If there is minimal verbal communication or interaction because the mother does not know that this is necessary for the child's development, not only is the child delayed in learning spoken language, but the child is not motivated to participate and respond.

The problems of teenage parents are not isolated but affect all areas of their lives and their children. Services sensitive to the needs of the teenage parent are needed to help supplement the family. By providing support for the new generation, family values and commitments can be maintained and nurtured.

The Extended Family

The makeup of what is considered immediate family has undergone radical change in this century. In the recent past extended families were the norm in society. There were grandparents living in the home or nearby: uncles, aunts, and cousins living in the same community. The family was extended not in terms of more children so much as more adults.

The extended family helped protect the family against economic and social pressures during the depression years when jobs were scarce. The United States had not fully recovered from The Great Depression when it was plunged into World War II. The war emergency created a new need to employ all available workers, whether men or women, in wartime industries (Roberts, Note 6).

Problems arose when mothers did not know where to leave their children during their working hours. The extended family was not available for child care because aunts and grandmothers, as well as mothers worked in the war effort. As a result of this dilemma schools developed by the federally supported Works Progress Administration (WPA), which were in the process of being closed at that time, were revived, utilizing many of their facilities and personnel. There was also development of child care centers with extended hours to serve children from two to five years of age and older children during their out-of-school hours.

Many changes have occurred since World War II. Urbanization

has further reduced the extended family by restricting community interaction:

> Where it has not decayed into an urban or rural slum--it has withered to a small circle of friends, most of them accessible only by car or telephone. Paradoxically, the more people there are around, the fewer the opportunities for meaningful human contact.
>
> Nowadays, neighborhood experiences available to children are extremely limited. To do anything at all--go to a movie, get an ice cream cone, go swimming, or play ball--one has to travel by car or bus. Rarely can a child see people working at their trades.
>
> Mechanics, tailors, or shopkeepers are either out of sight or unapproachable. Nor can a child listen to the gossip at the post office or on a park bench. And there are no abandoned houses, nor barns, no attics to break into. It is a pretty bland world.
>
> It does not really matter, however, for children are not at home much either. They leave early and it is almost supper time when they get there (Haimowitz & Haimowitz, 1973).

All of this means that American parents do not spend as much time with children as they used to. Systematic evidence consistent with this conclusion comes from surveys of child-rearing practices in the United States over a twenty-five-year period. As basis for the analysis, data were used from some thirty studies carried out by a variety of investigators. Originally, the data indicated a trend toward universal permissiveness in parent-child relations, especially in the period after World War II. The generalization applied in such diverse areas as oral behavior, toilet accidents, dependency, sex, aggressiveness, and freedom of movement outside the house.

The concept of role equality is another drastic change that accompanied the reduction of the extended family. The extended family often had authoritarian connotations in its child rearing patterns. Today, "the child sees a lack of consistency in a family and a society which is still groping toward a new social order" (Dreikurs, 1968, P. 22-23). Even very young children realize fairly early when there is confusion of authority in the home.

Inflation, high cost of living, expensive health care, energy usage, and housing shortages require reshaping of social policies related to families. Minority cultures have long depended on the extended family to support, care for, and educate children. Native American, Black, and Puerto Rican

families have relied on the solidarity and identity of the extended family community in providing for their children (Fantini & Cardevas, 1980; Uzoka, 1979).

The Need for Day Care Due to the Changing Family Structure

Throughout this century Americans have responded rapidly to the needs of the country concerning the care of its children. During the depression of the 1930s day care was provided for young children so teachers without jobs would be able to work. In the 1940s day care centers were established so mothers could work in factories and help in the war effort. The Kaiser Ship Yards in Portland, Oregon built two comprehensive day care centers in a few months' time, each serving over 1,200 children. In the 1960s day care was provided for children from low (SES) families as part of the War on Poverty programs. Gray and Klaus (1968) determined early intervention could eliminate many learning problems caused by being raised in a low economic environment.

When reviewing the reasons for establishing child care over the past 80 years the impetus again and again was the economic crises of the country, with little direct concern for children or their families. In the 1980s there is again an economic crisis that is an impetus for day care, but the impact of day care on the family is being considered more carefully. Sixty percent of mothers with school age children work outside the home compared to 26% who did in 1950. Although there is a great need for day care for these

children, our country is not responding as rapidly as it has in the past. There is not unified response as there was during the depression, World War II, or during the War on Poverty. Many legislators and citizens feel day care is an individual responsibility and should not concern the nation as a whole.

The dispute centers on the American tradition of the autonomy of the family. In 1971 President Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Development Act, as did President Ford in 1975, because it was seen as an erosion of American family life and encouraged women to leave home to work. As the preceding sections of this paper have indicated, the typical American family already has a mother who works outside the home. What Presidents Nixon and Ford, along with others, have refused to recognize is the American family has changed and with these changes more flexible and available programs are needed for child care.

Day care for children is needed for two important reasons due to changes in family life that have occurred. First, 30% of the children between the ages of 6-13 are home alone after school (Women's Bureau, 1977). A 1977 Department of Labor study reported parents were afraid to admit they left their children alone for part or all of the day, therefore the percentage may be higher. These "latchkey" children are responsible for household chores and often in charge of younger siblings. The second reason is 40% of the babies born in 1979 will spend a large portion of their

childhood in a one parent family (Keniston, 1977). The head of the household will most likely have to work outside the home creating the need for day care.

Because of the changes in the family various day care alternatives are being developed. An examination of a few of the types of programs will be presented.

Company based or industrial day care centers. The first company day care center was opened in the Scottish mills owned by Robert Owen in 1816. Having the child near the parents' work has occurred since mothers carried their infants with them to the fields. Corporations are now finding there are economic benefits of company based child care. Some of the benefits may be:

.greater worker productivity knowing the child is nearby and safe

.more security for the child knowing a parent is near

.less worker turnover

.less absenteeism and tardiness

.greater worker morale

.increased company recruitment.

Families who participate in company based day care also profit from the experiences the child is having in the following ways:

1. Parents and child can spend traveling time

together in the car or on the bus. Parents with children in distant day care centers often complain of the lack of time they have with their children.

2. Parents can observe their child during lunch and break time. This may eliminate the negative feelings parents may have when they spend up to 12 hours per day away from their child during the developing years.
3. The child can stay in the infirmary if slightly ill, thus eliminating the need for the parent to take a day off work.

Many corporations are finding the expenditures for company based care may be justified when worker productivity is examined. Whitbread (1979) reported 70% of mothers who work said their job performance increased if they have adequate care for their children.

Day care homes. A small day care home, usually in the child's neighborhood, allows for what Gray and Klaus (1968) called "horizontal diffusion." The child spends the day in a setting very similar to the home environment. The child is able to interact with children from similar backgrounds and cultures. To many mothers, centers for children are like institutions providing

custodial care so the day care homes are appealing. Bruce (1978) found this care arrangement to be favored by families interviewed on preference for type of center. Forty percent chose small day care homes; 33% chose care in their own home by a relative or friend; and 27% chose center-based care as the type they would consider optimal for their child. Rhodes and Moore (1976) reported in the National Child Care Consumer Study that 25.5% of the children in child care full time were in day care homes and 29.9% were in centers. They also found 100,000 licensed day care homes serving approximately 300,000 children.

Family based day care. The changes in American family life and effects on children discussed throughout this paper are the basis for reevaluating day care. In 1900, 50% of American families had a relative at home who could care for the children when the mother was out of the home, now only 4% do. The 1980 Family Circle survey of 10,000 working mothers found only one in ten would leave their child in the care of a relative. This statistic is not in agreement with the previously mentioned findings of Bruce (1978). The population of the Family Circle survey is not designed to be a sampling of all working mothers and their feelings on day care.

Center based day care. Day care centers include a variety of programs but fall into two basic groups: federally funded programs and privately funded programs. These centers vary

greatly in types of services for the child and the family. Rhodes and Moore (1976) reported there were 18,300 full-day child care centers in operation in this country which served over 90,000 children.

Franchised day care centers are privately funded and account for a growing number of programs. Many franchised centers are located in neighborhoods near shopping centers and public schools and are available for service to a community.

The public has a choice in most consumer products on the market including day care. Unfortunately, Grotberg (1980) found many parents do not distinguish between day care, nursery school, Head Start, or parent cooperative programs. With increased attention to child care in popular magazines and other media, parents are becoming educated in their choices. Child care should be made available to parents in a number of forms, all of high quality, which provide the type of service that fits their needs and the needs of their child.

Summary

The conclusions drawn from this review of literature on changing family structures indicate that the traditional American family has changed due to a rising divorce rate, lowered birth rate, increased numbers of women in the work force, altered male and female roles, mobility of society, and other changes in economic and value orientations. Because of changing family

structures child rearing patterns have altered also. The sources of support for families with children are not available in the same way they were provided a generation or two ago. In order to supplement the care families can provide for their children, new or additional, support systems for families must be found. Traditional family support systems also may need to be renewed.

Interest in the family and its needs is intense at this time. Sociologists, psychologists, educators, churches, government agencies, and citizens who see the family threatened are examining, observing, and questioning family needs and desires. The concept of family implies generational continuity through the family's children. Families are indicating an awareness of their needs for providing for and supporting their children within the context of changing family structures. The family has indeed changed in its configuration; it has not changed in attempting to meet the needs of its members, particularly its children.

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